



ENGLAND NETBALL

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021

#RISEAGAIN

#RISE
AGAIN

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THE YEAR OVERVIEW

A YEAR IN NETBALL LIKE NO OTHER, THIS REPORT TELLS OUR STORY AS THE NETBALL FAMILY NAVIGATE THEIR WAY THROUGH ONE OF THE TOUGHEST YEARS IN OUR SPORT TO DATE



COLIN POVEY, CHAIR

What a difference a year makes! 12 months ago, I was reflecting on a wave of positive, good news stories that had followed the Vitality Netball World Cup 2019 and we were fully expecting our sport to go from strength to strength. However, we were also just seeing the beginnings of the impact COVID-19 was having on society as a whole. Ultimately the virus stopped virtually all sports and sadly netball activities across both the elite and recreational game were suspended for much of the time covered by this annual report.

Whilst 2020 has seen the organisation challenged like never before we have also been reminded of just how passionate, resilient and dedicated the Netball Family is. I am incredibly proud of the way in which England Netball members of staff, led by CEO Fran Connolly, responded to the unprecedented circumstances. Endless hours were spent planning for a host of scenarios, liaising with Government, and keeping both members and volunteers updated as the pandemic evolved. Despite the distinct lack of action on the court we should be extremely proud of the way the wider Netball Family pulled together to protect our sport and keep each other safe.

Against a truly turbulent background it was a minor miracle that we managed to get the Vitality Roses to New Zealand for an international series towards the end of 2020. I am grateful for the support of both the UK and New Zealand Governments and for the commitment of all our travelling athletes who had to undergo rigorous testing and quarantine regimes. The series gave everyone associated with our sport a much needed boost when lockdown was restricting so many activities that we had previously taken for granted.

We were not so fortunate as we started 2021 when Jamaica had to pull out of their scheduled UK tour. However, with some innovative thinking; fantastic collaboration across many parts of the sport and another slug of good, old

fashioned hard work we managed to put on a replacement series between the Vitality Roses and the Vitality Netball Legends. Again, thanks are due to all those who worked so hard to create this opportunity. Shortly afterwards the Vitality Netball Superleague itself was able to return, albeit in a modified format and using two central venues. In this context the work of Independent Chair of the VNSL board Steve Elworthy and his fellow board members has been particularly valuable to us this year. Sky Sports provided streaming services that meant every single game could be viewed live by fans and in the circumstances this latest season has been a remarkable success.

Of course, the pandemic had a significant impact on our finances as well as our normal operations. Income from ticket sales and membership subscriptions were understandably reduced by a significant amount but we are grateful that so many members opted still to pay their full fees whilst not really knowing just how much netball they would play. Several of our leading sponsors and commercial partners also stood firmly by our side and continued to work with us to find new ways in which we could deliver mutually beneficial activities despite COVID-19. In addition, the Executive Team worked hard to minimise discretionary spend and this resulted in an end of year financial result to be proud of.

We also owe thanks to Sport England for their continued belief in our plans. They have provided both moral and financial support as well as allowing us greater flexibility, in the short term, as to how we are permitted to use the funds they provide. Additional Government support via the furlough scheme and the Sports Winter Survival Package administered by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport have also been much appreciated. These funds have been deployed to protect the sport at all levels and with a view to us returning to normal as soon and as safely as possible.

After last year's virtual AGM I am hopeful we will be able to meet in person again this year. Behind the scenes your



new President, Joan Mills MBE, has certainly had a unique 'induction' to her new role but she is just as energetic and committed as her predecessor, Lindsay Sartori.

The Board has continued to work hard on governance matters and in January this year we welcomed Jennifer Thomas as a new Co-Opted Director to assist with our work on inclusion and diversity. David Armstrong was appointed in July 2020 and brings a wealth of financial, commercial experience and a background in other sports. Fran has continued to develop her Executive leadership team and I am confident we have an effective team overseeing matters at both an executive and non-executive level. We are refining a new 'adventure strategy' for the sport which we hope will keep us ahead of the pack and as we move into the second half of 2021, we are working on succession plans for my own role and that of other senior directors as they approach the end of their maximum terms of office.

On all fronts the sport remains well set to pick up the pace again as the restrictions imposed by the pandemic start to ease. In addition, we will have a home Commonwealth Games to look forward to in 2022.

I hope the whole Netball Family will once again be able to come together and enjoy happier times but for now thank you once again for your support over the last 12 months.

FRAN CONNOLLY, CEO

This year has truly been like no other. We've faced many unexpected challenges, but I am so proud of all that we have achieved in the last 12 months. It has been an honour to see everyone's hard work, determination and collaborative thinking help to unite the netball community and ensure our sport didn't lose the momentum it was enjoying prior to COVID-19.

Despite having to navigate through the rapidly changing tides of the pandemic, we saw teammates fundraise for those working on the front line, athletes go above and beyond to ensure we could enjoy some elite netball on our screens, volunteers dedicate endless hours to return the game and netballers the length and breadth of the country come together to protect the sport despite all the uncertainty we were faced with.

It's remarkable how much impact we've been able to have despite a lot of netball activity being suspended. Throughout the last 12 months there's been a great deal of innovation, creative thinking and teamwork, which demonstrated that the Netball Family is full of trailblazers who are extremely passionate about the sport.

This year we've had to take a lot of things online due to the Government imposed lockdowns. First with the introduction of our new 'Virtual Netball Club' which brought our members closer to the game with online workouts, never seen before interviews and fun challenges, then through engaging Bee@Home resources, health and wellbeing webinars, virtual awards ceremonies, plus so much more. Our content and connection with the wider Netball Family has continued to go from strength to strength throughout this period, which has been a delight to see.

As ever, it's extremely important to us to keep women and girls active and connected to our sport, so getting members back on court this last year has been a huge

focus and challenge. It involved a huge effort, supported by the global netball family, with extensive game analysis, rule modifications, safety protocols being implemented, the introduction of COVID-19 Officers and so much more. I cannot thank our friends in Australia, New Zealand, Isle of Man, Ireland and Guernsey enough for their support with trialling rule modifications whilst here in England restrictions were prohibitive. All the necessary steps were taken at all levels of the sport to ensure a safe and Government approved return - it's been an unexpected journey getting here but it is incredible how much detail, thought and time went in to getting people back playing the sport we love.

We know this has been a hard year for everyone, however when I look back on all that we have achieved together, from 75% of the Netball Family standing beside us during a pandemic through the #RiseAgain campaign, reactivating international and Vitality Netball Superleague games with more visibility and views than ever before, as well returning the grassroots game to communities across the country in such uncertain times, I feel truly overwhelmed by the strength of the netball community.

It is a delight to see netballers everywhere jumping at the chance to get back on court now and their return is all thanks to the many volunteers who have worked tirelessly to safely return the action. We expect this to be one of the biggest summers of netball yet at a community level. I cannot wait to see what the next year holds... gold medal!

To wrap things up I just want to say a huge thank you to our staff, Board, members, volunteers, officials, coaches, athletes, partners, Vitality Netball Superleague and grassroots clubs, and everyone who has helped us to get to where we are today and stood by us - all of this wouldn't have been possible without everyone uniting for the sport. I can't wait to work with you all again on this exciting next chapter.



THE UNKNOWN

APRIL
MAY
JUNE

This year has been unlike any other. After COVID-19 spread across the country, we, like all sports, had to halt all activity from grassroots to elite level as the first Government lockdown was implemented. In April, the Prime Minister announced an extension to the lockdown, and it started to become clear that 'normality' wouldn't be returning any time soon.



VIRTUAL NETBALL CLUB

Being faced with an uncertain future, scores of members and fans missing their netball, and limited opportunities for the public to get active, we started to consider how we could take things online and keep people connected to our sport.

Our initial response was creating the galvanizing 'Virtual Netball Club' (VNC); a member only space which gives people access to a range of exciting opportunities and content, from live workouts with big netball stars to unseen Vitality Roses interviews and coaching tips. With a weekly schedule of new engaging content, this new channel empowered members to be healthier and happier off the court and brought members closer to the sport than ever before.

The VNC was a resounding success in all aspects and a real team effort, with the Vitality Roses leading workouts and sharing their insight in Netball Natter interviews, expert coaches giving in depth advice and support to others, England Netball Ambassador Sasha Corbin inspiring junior netballers through weekly training sessions, and partners providing exciting challenges and recipes for healthy eating, plus so much more.

The engagement on social media and the viewing numbers spoke for themselves.

What started out as an idea to keep members occupied and engaged with netball for what we thought would just be a few weeks of lockdown, turned into a year-long project. The VNC, continuously evolved with the development of an inspiring brand and content designed to meet the needs of the nation through the changing tides of the pandemic. We hope our members will continue to enjoy consuming and engaging with our sport through this new member benefit going forwards.

“
The VNC sessions have engaged the netball community and fed our passion.”

FROM THE START OF THE VIRTUAL NETBALL CLUB TO THE END OF MARCH 2021, THERE WERE OVER

55,000 VIEWS

OF THE VNC PAGES FROM OVER

30,000 UNIQUE PEOPLE

850,000+ TWITTER IMPRESSIONS

645,000+ FACEBOOK POST REACH



BEE@HOME

With the VNC making an impact, other areas of our sport were also moved online. Bee Netball online resources were launched for the under 11 age groups with simple, downloadable Bee@Home resources providing tips on how to enjoy Bee Netball challenges in your own home. Bee@Home proved popular, with some famous faces such as Gary Neville, Jess Thirlby and Tamsin Greenway giving it a try with their children. All the Bee@Home resources remain on the England Netball website for all to enjoy.



FROM APRIL - AUGUST 2020, BEE@HOME HAD

538 DOWNLOADS

143,000 TOTAL VIEWS

ACROSS ALL DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR THE SKILLS CHALLENGE

27,500 VIEWS OF GARY NEVILLE'S SKILLS CHALLENGE



WALKING NETBALL

From juniors to those who enjoy a slower version of the game, we wanted to provide something for everyone online during the lockdown. With Walking Netball primarily attracting people over the age of 60, many of whom were shielding and really feeling the impacts of lockdown, we wanted to help put a smile on their face and help them reconnect with their Walking Netball family. In May as part of National



Walking Month the Virtual Wiggle and Giggle online workout event was hosted to bring some light into what was an anxious and uncertain time for many.

The tailored home workout combined with a good old natter and giggle was a huge success with nearly 1,000 people taking part live, making it the biggest Wiggle and Giggle ever! It also paved the way for many more virtual Walking Netball sessions on a smaller scale but more regularly.



#TAKEGILBERTHOME

Our partners have also been key in driving forward new ideas and content, providing fun new ways to speak to our audience online, from the Jaffa Cam which saw the Vitality Roses give us a sneak peek into their daily lives in lockdown on Instagram to Gilbert's #TakeNetballHome which gave our followers a new activity to try at home each month. The campaign as a whole reached nearly a million and saw over **5,000** netball fans visit the Gilbert website and a fifth of those stocking up on netball essentials to keep training at home. From a Gilbert perspective, netballers were the only customers who continued to buy during the first lockdown when all sport was halted nationwide.



We have been so fortunate to see our Netball Family support our online initiatives over the last 12 months, as we stayed connected to our communities across England. Our volunteers who help make the game happen were fundamental in promoting and getting members engaged with many different activations. Our army of fantastic coaches and clubs across the country also delivered their own online training sessions for their participants to get involved with, it was a real movement of support throughout the pandemic.

ELLIS ADAMSON

Doctor at Royal Cornwall Hospital Trust
and part of St Agnes Netball Club
(South West Region)

Working through the Covid-19 pandemic as a junior doctor has been pretty tough. I am very lucky to be part of the St Agnes Netball Club family! We've kept each other moving and motivated through the lockdowns and my own motivation was definitely helped along by a surprise call from the amazing Jade Clarke as part of England Netball's 'Any dream we'll do'. I still feel a bit star-struck!



VOLUNTEERS

ANY DREAM WE'LL DO

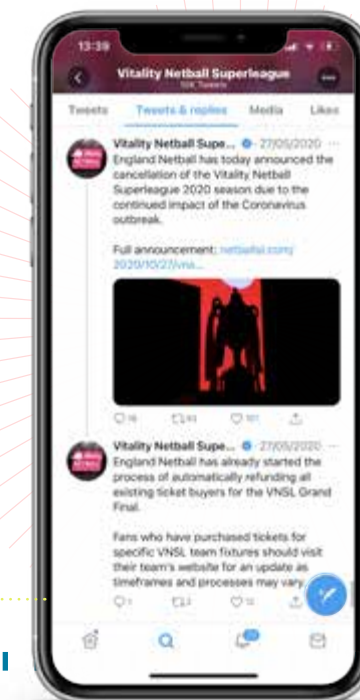
In the first few months of the pandemic, we were reminded of how truly inspirational the members of our Netball Family are. We were in awe of the number of members, including volunteers, players, coaches, officials and others who were working on the front line for the NHS during the pandemic, fundraising for vital causes or supporting others who were feeling isolated.

So, in May we launched our 'Any Dream We'll Do' initiative to celebrate and shine the light on some of our exceptional members. The idea was that people would nominate a team member, volunteer, committee member or fellow England Netball member that has been touching the lives of others, with a panel then selecting several nominees to have their netball dreams come true. Over 200 inspiring members of the Netball Family were nominated. Those nominating could even choose the prize they wanted their nominees to receive, from a surprise call with a Vitality Rose, to a training session with Head Coach Jess Thirlby or an umpiring masterclass with international umpire Gary Burgess. You name it, we did it, all with the Netball Family front of mind.



VNSL 2020

Whilst there are a lot of achievements for the Netball Family to look back on and be proud of over the last 12 months, there were many challenges too. One being the cancellation of several competitions towards the end of the 2019/20 Vitality Netball Superleague season. It had started with a bang; arenas were sold out, all eyes were on the game, and a new team (Leeds Rhinos) had been announced to be joining the league in 2021. There was so much to look forward to, but our hopes for finishing the season came to a halt at the end of May when we were forced to confirm that the 2020 season would not be completed as a result of the pandemic.



NETBALL AGAINST RACISM

On 25 May, the shocking death of George Floyd saw the global news agenda shift to the subject of racism. As an organisation we knew we needed to do more to support Black members of the Netball Family and stand together against racism. We were contacted by many incredible women in our sport at this time about the need for us to be part of the change, and we whole heartedly agreed.

As an initial, but vital step, we began running 'Here to Listen' forums for the Netball Family to come together and further explore the experiences of Black and ethnically diverse communities in our sport. We had so many inspiring open and honest discussions and as a result could start to make critical changes across our game.

Since this, we have reenergised our intent and action around all areas of inclusion in our sport as we are committed to ensuring that netball is a place where everyone can belong and thrive.

We have continued to work hard in this area and although we know there is more for us to do, everyone at England Netball is dedicated to making change and ensuring our sport is an inclusive and welcoming space. Here's what has happened over the last 12 months:

NETBALL AGAINST RACISM

England Netball took a stand against racism

MAY

JUNE

HERE TO LISTEN

Forums were held with over **200 members** of the Netball Family

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

celebrating the contributions of Black people in our sport including the Sky Sports Black Roses documentary

OCT

THE VITALITY NETBALL LEGENDS SERIES

The trophy was named after Jean Hornsby; the first Black England Netball player and throughout the tournament England Netball and the players demonstrated support of Netball Against Racism. During this month we also appointed Jennifer Thomas to the England Netball Board to support and progress equality, diversity and inclusion in netball

JAN

THE VITALITY NETBALL SUPERLEAGUE

Players took a knee at the start of each game to show their continued support of Netball Against Racism

FEB

TRAINING & STRATEGY

England Netball appointed VERCIDA Consulting to support the development of inclusion training and ensure inclusion principles are embedded throughout the new England Netball 10-year strategy currently being developed

MAR

VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEERS WEEK 1-7 JUNE

In June, we were delighted to be a part of a collaborative action of organisations coming together to say a massive thank you to volunteers for Volunteers' Week from 1-7 June. An estimated **26,000 people** volunteered for netball in this country in 2019, giving the equivalent of **£55m** of skilled time annually to the game.

To help say thank you, the Netball Family took things online again through a bespoke campaign where they were able to share a sentence about, and show appreciation for, a volunteer (or volunteers) they know. It was a chance for us to celebrate the contributions of the wonderful netball volunteers, who at that time were also putting considerable time into helping the nation through the pandemic.

The Netball Family showed real support of this campaign with content reaching a combined social engagement of **175,000**.



VOLUNTEERS WEEK

Lindsay Sartori
ENGLAND NETBALL PRESIDENT

Lindsay is in her 5th and final year as the England Netball President, she gives hundreds of hours of time to netball, as a volunteer, championing and nurturing the next generation of volunteers. Lindsay you're amazing and we want to say, thank you.

June 1-7 2020

Fran Connolly
CEO, ENGLAND NETBALL

VOLUNTEERS WEEK

Janet Wrighton
Former EN President (2009 - 2014)

Janet has held over thirty volunteer roles in netball and continues to dedicate significant time and effort championing netball locally and internationally. She was awarded the MBE in 2008 and inducted into the Hall of Fame for services to netball. Janet you're amazing, thank you

June 1-7 2020

Fran Connolly
CEO, ENGLAND NETBALL

VOLUNTEERS WEEK

Phyllis Avery
FORMER EN PRESIDENT (2004 - 2008)

Taking on her first committee role in 1963, Phyllis went on to Chair the first AENA 'Development Committee' in 1965 with early pioneers of netball. She is passionate about encouraging and enthusing others to get involved and was awarded the MBE in 2000. She is current President of the South Region. Phyllis, you're amazing, thank you.

June 1-7 2020

Fran Connolly
CEO, ENGLAND NETBALL

PLANNING A COMEBACK

JULY
AUGUST

As summer began, we started to see a glimmer of normality returning in England. From 1 June schools started reopening, shortly followed in July by non-essential shops, pubs, restaurants and other businesses opening their doors. However, for a period there was still uncertainty about what this meant for sport.



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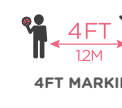
RETURN TO PLAY

Some community sports were given the green light from the Government to return towards the end of July, such as cricket, which could be played socially distanced in its original form. However, as a close contact sport, largely played indoors, a great deal of research and testing was required to develop modifications to standard netball rules in order to reduce the duration of close contact between players, as per Government requirements. All our findings and suggested modifications were submitted to Government in the form of a detailed action plan and then it became a waiting game to receive approval to be able to return netball.

MODIFIED NETBALL ACTIVITY RULE MODIFICATIONS



4FT SPACING FOR THE START OF PLAY



4FT MARKING



4FT POSITION OF PENALISED PLAYER



REMOVAL OF TOSS UPS



REMOVAL OF IDLE INTERACTIONS



NO BIB OR PERSONAL ITEM SHARING



ON CONTACT WITH POSTS SANITISE BEFORE RESUMING PLAY



BLENDED NETBALL

As part of Youth Sport Trust's National School Sports Week, we launched Blended Netball. Blended Netball is a new secondary school peer-to-peer offer, which, along with providing pupils with special educational needs (SEN) a new sport, gives the opportunity for mainstream girls to develop important life skills such as leadership, communication and empathy.

The programme was extensively tested in London thanks to funding through the TeamUp project, designed to support the legacy of the Netball World Cup 2019. Initial plans were to roll the programme out across the country after the 2020 Easter holidays but this was delayed due to the global pandemic.

However, over the summer we developed several webinars for teachers to learn about the programme so that they could see how they could embed Blended Netball into the new school year. 599 teachers and deliverers signed up to learn more and over 100 schools registered to introduce it into their school.

Whilst there have been more delays than we had hoped to get it up and running, the response to this programme has been phenomenal and we can't wait to see how schools and participants embrace it once it is in full flow.

NWC2019 - 1 YEAR ON

Whilst the Netball Family waited with bated breath for news that netball could return, this provided a great opportunity to remember the journey the sport is on and we looked back on the anniversary of the Vitality Netball World Cup 2019 in Liverpool. One year on saw the release of an impact report which celebrated the achievements of this iconic event, where the world's best teams battled for glory in Liverpool back in July 2019 and provided motivation to regain that momentum once netball could return.

ONE YEAR ON FROM VITALITY NETBALL WORLD CUP

2.41M PEOPLE
FEEL MORE PASSIONATE ABOUT NETBALL FOLLOWING THE EVENT

160,000 GB WOMEN
WERE INSPIRED BY THE EVENT TO START PLAYING / PLAY MORE NETBALL

743,000 ADULTS
WERE INSPIRED BY THE EVENT TO WATCH [MORE] LIVE NETBALL

5.1M GB ADULTS
AGREE THE VITALITY ROSES ARE AN INSPIRATION TO WOMEN AND GIRLS

500 FREE SESSIONS
PROVIDED BY CLUBS FOLLOWING THE EVENT



JULY

#RISEAGAIN

After taking time to reflect, attention returned to the future of our sport with the new membership window looming. With netball still not back in action, it was clear that retaining members for the 2020/21 season was vital for the sports short term and long-term prosperity. As a not-for-profit organisation, membership is vital to the continued running and development of our sport. Without this, much of the good work undertaken at all levels of the sport would not be able to continue. Retaining our membership however was not only of financial importance, throughout the pandemic it was well documented that female activity levels were disproportionately impacted and keeping the vital connection with our members would be paramount for helping the Netball Family return to the sport when ready.

We know the Netball Family are passionate, supportive and determined, and in this year like no other we had to call on them to stand behind our sport despite the uncertainty of when we'd be back or how much opportunity there would be to play. We asked the public to help netball #RiseAgain by committing to their membership for the 2020/21 season.

We recognised that some members of the Netball Family would have also suffered financial hardship, so for that reason, we offered an optional 30% discount. However, for those that chose to pay the full price of membership by the end of September, we pledged to put their names on court at the next international series as a thank you for their support.

The #RiseAgain campaign was accompanied by an emotive video and we asked our volunteers to support us in sharing our plea far and wide. We were overwhelmed with the response. Our regions,

counties, clubs and registered leagues helped to amplify the message and, in some cases, offered further support themselves to members. Our Vitality Roses showed their support on social media, and we also enjoyed some great media coverage. As a result, we had a whopping 79,000 plus members sign up for a 2020/21 membership during the period of this report, which is almost 75% of what we achieved the previous season, and 64% of members paid their full membership fee in support of the sport. It was more than we could have hoped for and without our members and volunteers' continued dedication and loyalty, the sport would not have achieved the success it has since.

PERSONAL MEMBERSHIP

Membership category	2019/20*	2020/21*
Over 18	49,588	34,070
Under 18	13,602	12,052
Under 14	21,890	18,830
Under 11	17,978	13,658
Social and supporting	2,876	1,187
Total	105,904	79,797

GROUP MEMBERSHIP

Membership Category	2019/20*	2020/21*
Primary School	4,656	4,671
Secondary School	1,522	184
University/College	51	28

*For the period ending 31 March

#RISEAGAIN

ANNE WIGNALL Lancashire County Chair

The Lancashire County Netball Association agreed to remove the County fee for adult members and retain the junior membership fee but donate this back to England Netball. The committee was conscious of the financial hardship COVID-19 had on members and introduced membership giveaways, providing an opportunity for Lancashire members to win back the cost of their membership. In addition, the committee has worked with 4 leagues throughout lockdown to successfully convert them to member leagues allowing them to have full access to all England Netball support and protocols, providing a safe environment for members to play.

NETBALL ROADMAP

Towards the end of August, the longed-for news that grassroots netball could return was confirmed by the Government provided the new game modifications were put in place. The challenge now was ensuring all volunteers, staff, coaches, officials, and players understood the rule changes and what protocols had to be followed to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

A detailed Care Package outlining the stages of netball's return and everything volunteers needed to know was launched, we held club and league forums to answer questions in person and published detailed communications to all the Netball Family, so they were prepared for what to expect. The guidance was extensive with test and trace planning in place, risk

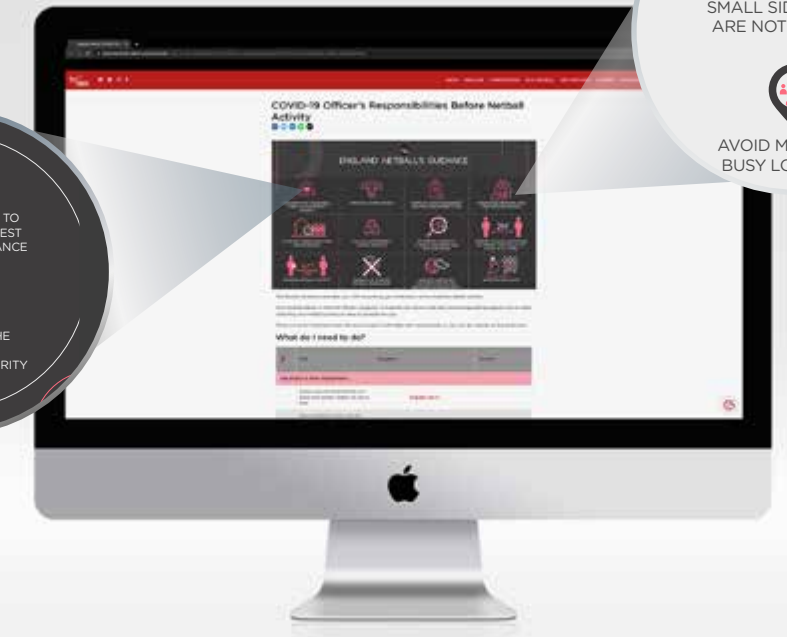
assessment documents created, and the introduction of a COVID-19 Officer role which had 900 people step forward to support netball's return in the first month, which later grew to over 2,500.

To support these roles and the wider volunteer network and following the success of region and county forums held throughout the summer, we introduced club and league forums and weekly communication to support our 7,000 volunteers, including all the COVID-19 Officers, to apply the restart guidance to their local organisations.

Adapting to the COVID-19 mitigation requirements was not the only challenge clubs and leagues faced,

another obstacle was accessing facilities. Leisure providers had been hard hit with some not surviving the pandemic and many school facilities weren't available as they focused on trying to return children safely to classrooms. As a result, there was limited access to indoor venues at this time and a lack of outdoor netball courts across the country.

During the summer we slowly progressed through the stages of return with individuals firstly being able to take part in socially distanced netball activity in small groups, then we saw the return of training and had hope for competition being able to restart for the new season.



NAVIGATING THE TIERS

SEPTEMBER
OCTOBER

The hope of the return of competition was dampened when in mid-September the Prime Minister announced new restrictions in England, this included the rule of six which once again affected our plans to return the game. At the start of October, a new three-tier system began in England, which effected what level of the game participants could play depending on their location. A few regions were able to still deliver some form of netball activity, whilst others were facing a complete lockdown.



{03}

RETURNING IN TIERS

Despite yet again being faced with more challenges caused by the pandemic, our volunteers worked tirelessly to keep members connected to the game and up to date as to what these tiers meant for them. It was a difficult time as the challenges and restrictions varied across different parts of the country. The guidance and care packages were altered to factor various implications, more online club and league forums were held to continue to support people with navigating through this time as best as we possibly could and detailed which tier each region sat in and what that meant for netball in their area.

With netball's full return still uncertain, access to the 30% discount on membership, which was due to end on 30 September 2021 was extended, so that people could still be a part of helping our sport to #RiseAgain for a lower fee. All members signing up before the end of October 2020 could also benefit from 15% off the England Netball Store in recognition of their continued support.



#TOGETHERWEARENETBALL

During this period, all the home nations joined forces to help protect netball's future. The governing bodies for netball in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales launched a joint initiative called #TogetherWeAreNetball aimed at protecting the sport's longevity and getting women and girls across the UK active again.

As part of this joint initiative, we shined the light on some worrying statistics based on women's activity levels which were affected due to COVID-19. With only 25% of women meeting weekly activity guidelines of 150 minutes per week according to a survey conducted on behalf of Sport England, and 39% concerned that losing their fitness would have a long-term impact according to a Women in Sport report, we knew we had to raise these concerns and do more as a female dominated sport.

As part of this campaign, all four countries asked people to join the conversation, to continue to get behind netball and each made a huge effort to do everything possible to get people active despite not being able to return to courts at that time. England Netball specifically did this by continuing to provide and enhance our Virtual Netball Club offering.



LEVEL 3 COACHING COURSE

We had originally planned to start our Level 3 coaching course in July 2020 but as this course was due to be delivered on a face-to-face basis this was not possible. Therefore, the opportunity was taken to review the Level 3 course content to allow delivery of it in a blended fashion. Consequently, the first weekend of the course was hosted virtually in September 2020.



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

With mass gatherings not permitted, England Netball like many regions, counties, clubs and leagues had to rethink our approach to the Annual General Meeting (AGM). To ensure that voting members could still engage with the meeting and cast their votes, a virtual member meeting was hosted to celebrate the amazing successes of the prior year and group members were asked to submit their votes on resolutions in advance of the AGM. We had to conduct the AGM behind closed doors but for the first time streamed the proceedings so members could still watch.



The AGM saw us announce the appointment of Joan Mills MBE as the new England Netball President. Joan's appointment in this voluntary role came as fellow England Netball Honorary Life Member, Lindsay Sartori stepped down from the helm after five successful years.

Throughout the years, Joan has dedicated herself to boosting the sport's growth and profile, something that was recognised in the Queen's 90th Birthday honours in 2016 when she was awarded an MBE for her services to the game.

Upon her appointment Joan commented: "I am passionate about the sport of netball and want to see England be number one in the World, not just in World rankings, but as the number one women's sport in the eyes of the media and general public from participation numbers, volunteering, officiating at all levels from grassroots to top level competition in the Premier League and Vitality Netball Superleague. I have high hopes and ambitions for the sport and am excited to get started in this new role."

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Having hosted several 'Here to Listen' forums on the experience of ethnically diverse communities in netball, one emerging and important theme was the need for more representation and celebration of Black people across our organisation at all levels, from grassroots to elite. In October, through Black History Month we took this important month as an opportunity to continue the momentum of the anti-racism movement as we are determined that our sport should offer a place of inclusivity, acceptance and belonging.

We celebrated the unique Black contributions from within our Netball Family, sharing video messages and written stories from several Black members, and celebrated what Black History Month means to them and their work within netball. The videos had over 35,000 views across Facebook and Twitter.

Here are the incredible women we highlighted during this time:

HALIMAT ADIO VITALITY ROSE



Halimat Adio of the Roses has three senior caps to her name after competing in Netball Europe in 2019. She has been a Future for two years now and excels as goal keeper for London Pulse in the Vitality Netball Superleague.

"Netball is such a diverse and inclusive sport and Black History Month is meant to be a time where we learn more about our history, and I also think it's important that we celebrate the past, present and future Black athletes of the sport."

JODIE GIBSON COMMONWEALTH GAMES GOLD MEDALLIST



Jodie Gibson has been part of the Vitality Roses set up for years now and has 25 caps for her country. She won the Commonwealth Games in 2018 and has been a strong presence in the Vitality Netball Superleague since her debut.

"Through netball, I have had so many incredible opportunities. I have met some of the most amazing people."

JANET HILLS HEAD COACH



Janet Hills is Head Coach of Swanley Netball Club and also became the first female Chair of the Met Black Police Association (MetBPA).

"Netball is inclusive to all ... regardless of a person's creed or colour."



JEAN HORNSBY FIRST BLACK NETBALL PLAYER TO REPRESENT ENGLAND



Jean Hornsby started playing netball at school and soon became captain of the England U21 side, a title she held for two years before she made history as the first Black netball player to play for the senior international team.

"Black history is a part of netball history."

CHERRON INKO-TARIAH BACK TO NETBALLER



Cherron Inko-Tariah, who is the CEO of The Power of Staff Networks, played netball throughout primary and secondary school before discovering Back to Netball as an adult.

"I think it's important that we look through the history of netball and look at where we are today and think about the contribution made by people from the African diaspora to help make the game what it is today."

JENNY THOMAS WALKING NETBALL HOST



Jenny Thomas first started playing netball in primary school and is now a Walking Netball Host. She still regularly plays as a goal keeper and watches the sport on TV.

"Netball has brought through some fantastic African and Caribbean players which needs to be celebrated."

JEWEL UCHEGBU NETBALL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY COACH



Jewel Uchegbu's netball journey started in primary school and has continued ever since with her currently working as a Netball Development Community Coach for England Netball.

"We can educate our young people and Netball Family, and embrace the role models that we have within the sport."

MARLENE WANDER VICE CHAIR, LONDON AND SOUTH EAST



From coaching to umpiring, assessing, and mentoring to founding a club over 36 years ago, Marlene Wander has been involved in netball in a variety of roles for over 40 years. She is also currently Vice Chair of the London and South East region and Chair of Kent County Netball.

"I think that we just really need to spread the word, not only just about all our different denominations of people that's within the sport and celebrate who they are, but also ensure that saying netball makes us be the person that we are and that netball is me."

EBISO WHYTE YOUTH NETBALLER



Ebiso Whyte, 15, started playing netball in Year 9 with her club and joined Vitality Netball Superleague club London Pulse as a defender just over a year ago.

"It's so important that the netball community celebrates Black History Month."

CADBURY NETBALL SERIES

There were more celebrations to be had in October, as we were able to surprise fans with an international test series between the Vitality Roses and the New Zealand Silver Ferns amidst a COVID-19 disrupted international season.

The three-test Cadbury Netball Series, with the Taini Jamison Trophy on the line, saw the Vitality Roses step on court against the Silver Ferns for the first time since January 2020. The series took place at Claudelands Arena in Hamilton on 28 October, 30 October and 1 November, with Sky Sports covering all the action live.

Not long after announcing her 16 strong squad set to face the World Champions, Head Coach Jess Thirlby received a positive COVID-19 test result meaning she was forced to stay behind as the team, alongside Assistant Coach Kat Ratnapala, set off without her.

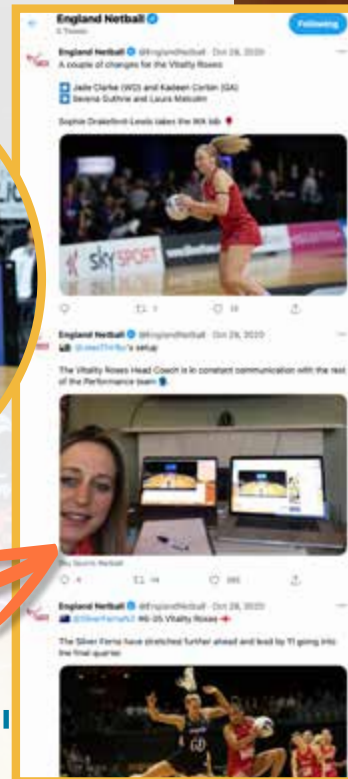
Not one to be deterred from potential success on the international stage, Jess continued to lead the team from afar, making use of Zoom calls and a range of technical means to ensure she could stay connected with the players.



Despite the series concluding in victory for the Silver Ferns, fans were suitably impressed by the performances put out by the Vitality Roses, which saw young guns such as Sophie Drakeford-Lewis and Imogen Allison, just to name a few, make their

mark. Plus, who can forget Serena Guthrie receiving her 100th cap on the final game of the series?

The dedication of the Roses to get to New Zealand and compete despite the pandemic was phenomenal. Due to the players still working through their return to play schedule set out by the Government prior to the tournament, there were many challenges to overcome with tight COVID-19 protocols in place, which included isolating in a hotel in New Zealand for 14 days prior to competition, consuming all meals in individual bedrooms, regular testing on site and training in small bubbles before being able to get on court for the series. It's clear that the tour was a remarkable success and well worth the team's effort behind the scenes in making this event happen.

Head Coach, Jess Thirlby working from home



		
MATCH 1	58	- 45
MATCH 2	54	- 47
MATCH 3	62	- 47

STEP BACK AGAIN

NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
JANUARY

Our joy of seeing a slither of our community game returning was short lived as on 5 November a second national lockdown came into force in England. After a four-week halt to the game, the Government announced the return of the tier system on 2 December and the process of unlocking netball began once more.

{04}

PERFORMANCE DIRECTOR

England Netball was delighted to announce the appointment of David Parsons as Performance Director in November, following a lengthy international recruitment process. David joined England Netball following a successful 12-year tenure as Performance Director of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) where he was responsible for developing the systems, programmes, people, and pathways that identified and prepared players for the England team. During his time as Performance Director, the England cricket team won the 2019 Cricket World Cup and the 2010 World Twenty20 competition and were ranked number one in the world in all formats of the game.

David has a wealth of experience in the elite sporting landscape and is passionate about the development of world leading performance environments for our sport to help realise potential success at the next Commonwealth Games and Netball World Cup.



NIKE KIT LAUNCH

November saw the launch of the new Nike Roses Range, and even with the significant challenges placed on the majority of retail sectors during the pandemic, England Netball had one of the most successful launches to date. At the beginning of the month, we shared teaser shots of the kit, a live member webinar with the likes of Serena Guthrie and Jess Thirlby in attendance discussing the new range and published an exciting reveal video on the day of the launch.

Nike delivered product truly unique to England Netball and the demand for this product exceeded all expectations. To showcase this, England Netball revamped the England Netball Store website, making it more user friendly and engaging.

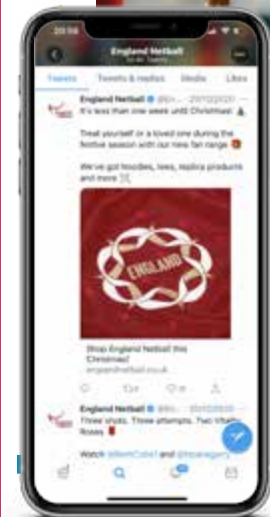
As a result, within 72 hours of the launch, the kit had contributed to 12% of the total sales across the England Netball Store for that financial year, with the website seeing 35,000 views over the same 72-hour period.

As retail starts to recover, we look forward to bringing even more new and exciting merchandise to the market.



OUTDOOR COMMUNITY NETBALL

Following the return to the tier system netball was able to start the process of returning once more. Winter was now in full swing and netball was confined to outdoor courts only, many of our clubs were struggling to access courts with floodlighting. Those that could find suitable facilities were layering up and preparing to brave netball in the cold, but it was a small price to pay for many who were simply happy to be reunited with their teammates in one way or another.



RAINBOW LACES

Each year we as an organisation join the Rainbow Laces campaign to celebrate the impact that our sport has on LGBTQ+ members of the Netball Family, and likewise the impact they have on our sport.

We are committed to better understanding LGBTQ+ experiences in netball, so, as part of this campaign in November, we ran our second series of Here to Listen forums to explore what it's like to be an LGBTQ+ member of the Netball Family and to understand any challenges facing the community.

We were also delighted to support Sky Sports with their coverage of this important campaign and were pleased to see them profile and shine a light on Vitality Rose Stacey Francis-Bayman and her partner Loughborough Lightning Head Coach Sara Francis-Bayman.



VITALITY GOALDEN GLOBE AWARDS

We say it a lot, but our volunteers really do make the game happen, without them our sport would not be where it is today. Each year we like to take the time to celebrate the achievements of our volunteers who go above and beyond by hosting the Vitality Goalden Globe Awards.

COVID-19 restrictions were not going to stop us from thanking and celebrating our dedicated volunteers, so like much else in December 2020 we took the awards into the virtual world! It was no easy feat, but the nine regions held their awards virtually to select nominees that were put forward to the live online national awards ceremony on the England Netball YouTube channel.

The star-studded evening, which saw over 750 people watch live, boasted a number of special guests from both within netball and the wider sporting landscape, such as Clare Balding, Denise Lewis, Ellie Simmonds, Serena Guthrie, and Tracey Neville just to name a few.

There were 31 award recipients throughout the night, celebrating those giving their service to netball for over 25 years, to many who kept the game going during a difficult year. It was an emotional event with so many deserving nominees and winners.



YOUNG NETBALL VOLUNTEER AWARD
Eleanor Mills (Yorkshire)

OUTSTANDING NETBALL CLUB AWARD
Crosskeys Netball Club (East)

MARY BULLOCH ADMINISTRATOR AWARD
Helen Preston (London and South East)

MURIEL MCNALLY AWARD
Pat Arnott (North West and West Midlands)

GRASSROOTS COACH OF THE YEAR
Abby Chamberlain (North West)

SHEELAGH REDPATH GRASSROOTS OFFICIAL AWARD
Michelle Ray (London and South East)

NETBALL TEACHER AWARD
Lou Burgan (South West)

UNSUNG HERO AWARD
Myra Hawtree (East)

PASS ON YOUR PASSION
Tegan Lintonbon-Baker (East Region)
Scarlett Robb (East Region)
Claudia Robb (West Midlands)
Sophie Crooks (Yorkshire)

NATIONAL LONG SERVICE AWARD
Susan Garrett
Zena Johnston

INCLUSION AND DIVERSITY AWARD
Lucy McFayden

ROSE AWARD
Felicity O'Leary
Jan Johnson
Crystal Buchanan
Watford Netball League
Andy Lamb

#RISEAGAIN CHAMPION AWARD
Becky Sidwell

PRESIDENT'S SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD
Joanna Coates (formerly Adams)

SPECIAL RECOGNITION AWARD
Lindsay Impett
Lindsay Sartori

HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS
Gary Burgess
Paul Clark
Jean Davies
Karen Jones



APPOINTMENT OF JENNIFER THOMAS

At the beginning of 2021, with the support of Sport England, the England Netball Board completed a thorough recruitment process for a new Non-Executive Director to provide added support in the area of equality, diversity and inclusion.

We were delighted off the back of this to announce the appointment of Jennifer Thomas; a former England 400m hurdler and co-founder of Black Inclusion Week, to take on the new role. She quickly became involved in supporting England Netball's inclusion projects bringing her wealth of experience from both a sporting and corporate background.

One element of the work in this area included identifying opportunities to support the development of England Netball staff. In January as part of National Mentoring Month, England Netball confirmed the launch of a new mentoring programme in collaboration with UK Athletics. For this new partnership UK Athletics senior managers will act as mentors to employees from England Netball. The 12-month programme, which commenced in February, has so far been very well received.

"I've always loved netball, and I believe it can be accessible to so many people from any demographic background, ensuring it is as inclusive and open to all. I want to help represent the voices of those who may feel they are not always heard in the community and help England Netball to expand its reach even further into these communities."



In January England Netball was delighted to announce a multi-year partnership extension with **Red Bull** as our **Official Performance Drink Supplier**. The partnership sees the energy drink manufacturer and world-renowned brand continue to fuel the Vitality Roses both in training and on court through to 2023. Red Bull has continued to support England Netball and our players throughout the pandemic by fuelling players during at home workouts as well as connecting athletes to discuss best practice on digital zoom sessions.



VITALITY NETBALL LEGENDS SERIES

When we would all usually be planning our New Year's resolutions in January, preparing to get back into training and work after a Christmas break with loved ones, we instead faced a third Government imposed lockdown.

Once again though, the Netball Family showed its resilience as both the nation and our game faced unprecedented times.

To give fans something to look forward to and get the elite game back on court England Netball had been preparing to host Jamaica's Sunshine Girls on home soil. However, COVID-19 related flight restrictions prevented their travel to the UK, but we wouldn't let that stop us! Instead, the Vitality Netball Legends Series was born, which saw 14 England players face an All Stars side made up of the best international talent in the Vitality Netball Superleague, with all the games streamed live by Sky Sports.

The Vitality Roses did not disappoint and lifted the Jean Hornsby Cup, named after England's first Black netball player, at the conclusion of the three-match series. England displayed great dominance on court, despite a tenacious effort from the All Stars, a team

led by Manchester Thunder's Head Coach Karen Greig, that had only played together for three days prior to the games starting.

Whilst we were able to enjoy some jam-packed netball action back on our screens, this event also looked to celebrate the support of our Netball Family. On the court, 41,598 member names were displayed to thank those who paid their full membership fee in 2020 despite the impact of COVID-19 and a social media name hunt ensued. Whilst fans were not able to cheer the players on in person, thanks to our title partner Vitality providing a digital fan wall which meant the athletes could still witness the many smiles, waves, and cheers of their supporter's court-side.

Digital content was scaled up around the series since fans couldn't be there in person, this included the introduction of bespoke half time and full-time graphics through a new service called Playing Surface as well as the addition of Grabby, a service which allowed live action clips of exciting moments from the game to be posted directly to Twitter. There was a fantastic reaction on social media to all coverage of the series, which looked more premium than ever before.

MATCH 1
MATCH 2
MATCH 3

ENG **ALL***
70 - 54
67 - 44
55 - 43



THROUGHOUT THE SERIES, THERE WERE



1M+

IMPRESSIONS

42,500+

ENGAGEMENTS



375,000+

POST REACH

80,500+

ENGAGEMENTS



1.1M+

IMPRESSIONS

50,000+

ENGAGEMENTS



RISE AS ONE

FEBRUARY MARCH

In February, thanks to the success of the vaccination programme, the Prime Minister published the Government's roadmap which outlined their plans for the lifting of lockdown three and the gradual removal of all restrictions. Off the back of this, England Netball were then able to develop the revised Spring 2021 Roadmap for Netball.

VITALITY NETBALL SUPERLEAGUE 2021

The build-up to the Vitality Netball Superleague 2021 season started back in August with the announcement of the player signing window. From 19 August to 30 October 2020 all 11 franchises, including newcomers Leeds Rhinos, began revealing their squads for the 2021 season.

Up until Deadline Day, fans we surprised with some eye-catching moves between clubs. Leeds Rhinos set the benchmark by naming England's most capped player, Jade Clarke, as their first club signing, Saracens Mavericks introduced Commonwealth Games gold medallist Jodie Gibson into their ranks and Team Bath welcomed back Layla Guscoth following a two-year stint in the Suncorp Super Netball League.


It was the most exciting and debated signing window to date, with 1.6 million tweet impressions and 15,400 clicks from August 19 to October 30 and exciting coverage from the likes of Sky Sports, BBC Sport and the Telegraph to name a few, but the only worry lingering in the back of everyone's minds, with COVID-19 continuing to hinder events across the whole sporting landscape, was whether the 2021 season would be able to take place.



Despite concerns, alongside the Vitality Netball Superleague Board, we persevered and planned for all scenarios and successfully bid to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as one of 11 sports to receive £4.2 million funding as part of the Winter Survival Fund to support the hosting of the season and sustainability of the Vitality Netball Superleague clubs. Thanks to this funding in the first week of February, the return of the league was announced, accompanied by the news of a new multi-year broadcast partnership with Sky Sports, which was the largest media partnership in England Netball's history. This meant that although fans could not attend, every match of the 2021 season would be broadcast live across Sky Sports platforms.

The new agreement meant the competition had its greatest visibility to date, which was a huge success given that the Vitality Netball Superleague looked different than any year prior due to the pandemic.

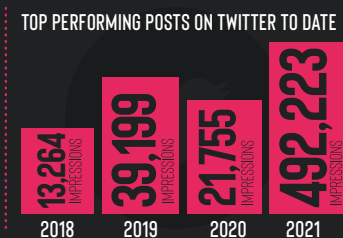
15.5% ↑  IN FOLLOWERS ON @NETBALLSL TWITTER FROM APRIL 2020 (22,025) TO MARCH 2021 (25,351)

182% ↑  IN FOLLOWERS ON INSTAGRAM FROM APRIL 2020 (5,514) TO MARCH 2021 (15,571)

AS OF MAY 31, THE VNSL INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT HAS HAD **5,602,191** CONTENT INTERACTIONS IN 2021

THE TOP PERFORMING POST TO DATE DURING THE 2021 SEASON ON INSTAGRAM IS THE FIRST-EVER REEL PUBLISHED BY THE ACCOUNT.

121,000  **PLAYS** **5,760**  **LIKES**



THROUGHOUT THE SEASON, THERE WERE

112 FIXTURES COMPLETED (98%)

5,376 MINS OF ACTION BROADCAST/STREAMED LIVE

12,407 TESTS FOR COVID-19 COMPLETED

2.24M VIEWERS

RISE. AS ONE.

In the lead up to the start of the season England Netball launched the Rise. As One. Campaign which captured the unique spirit of the Netball Family as we looked to restart and rebuild the elite competition in this country. It was not just the players that would help us do this – every single member of the Netball Family played their part. From player, to coach, to physio, volunteers and officials, to partners, broadcasters, media and of course fans, coupled with the relentless efforts of staff behind the scenes at England Netball and the Vitality Netball Superleague clubs. Everyone did their bit in starting and delivering the league in this challenging season, and together we were able to Rise. As One.

To abide by COVID-19 restrictions and ensure the safety of all involved in the league, the 2021 season had to be run very differently from the usual home and away format. This included hosting all games from two centralised venues; Studio 001 in Wakefield for the first part of the season covered by the period of this report and then following this the competition relocated to finish out the season at the Copper Box Arena in London. The event set up involved the removal of fans, a rigorous testing process for all players, staff, umpires and others facilitating the games, onsite doctors on hand always, strict isolating, and social distancing rules off the court for all players, plus more. It was not easy but thanks to everyone's dedication and commitment the league got off to an exciting first half.



PAT PERCY
Lead Technical Official
for the North East region

Pat has volunteered to be the Technical Official for the 2021 VNSL season, she's also volunteered at major netball events such as the Vitality Netball World Cup.

I love trying to empower people to want to be involved and hope I make a difference



VOLUNTEERS

VNSL TIMELINE

19 AUGUST TO 30 OCTOBER 2020

- all 11 franchises, including newcomers Leeds Rhinos, began revealing their squads for the 2021 season.

JANUARY

- successfully bid to the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as one of 11 sports to receive £4.2 million funding as part of the Winter Survival Fund

25TH APRIL - moved to Copper Box

28 MAY - the return of a limited number of fans (up to 1,000 per day) to the Copper Box Arena

JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL

FEBRUARY

- the return of the league was announced, accompanied by the news of a new multi-year broadcast partnership with Sky Sports,

12 FEB - Season Opener in Wakefield

26 AND 27 JUNE

- Finals Weekend at Copper Box Arena

27 JUNE

- Loughborough Lightning claim the title of 'champions'

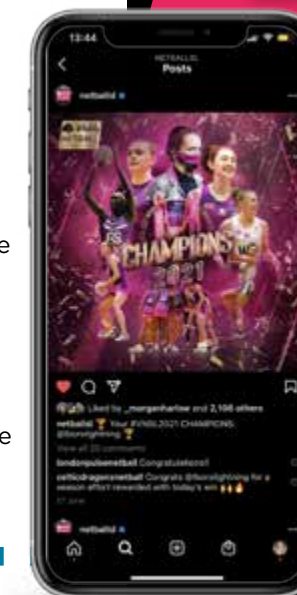
RETURN OF SPECTATORS

From 28 May we were delighted to be able to return a limited number of fans (up to 1,000 per day) to the Copper Box Arena to enjoy the remaining rounds of the league under updated Government guidance. This meant that fans were able to attend the highly anticipated Finals Weekend on 26 and 27 June, which saw Loughborough Lightning claim the title of 'champions' for the first time in their team's history.

The sold-out Finals Weekend was a huge success both on and off court. Journalists from The Times, The Telegraph, The Independent, BBC, Sky Sports, the Netball Show and a range of regional outlets attended and covered the dramatic end to the season.

Efforts on the court matched those off the court. The 2021 season proved to be a thrilling spectacle and fantastic showcase of the sport. Thanks to the increased broadcast coverage on average 20k people enjoyed watching each game of the season unfold and social media engagement soared.

VNSL 2021 CHAMPIONS



RETURN TO PLAY ROADMAP

Following the Governments roadmap to lift lockdown being published the revised Spring 2021 Roadmap for netball was released. This roadmap ran all the way through to the removal of the game modifications and the return of tournaments, which we hoped would be achieved before the start of the 2021/22 season.

Step 1 began with netball resuming in schools and as part of this we hosted several 'Return to Play' forums for COVID-19 Officers to attend and updated the Care Package to help clubs return and tackle any ongoing challenges, such as accessing facilities.

The response from volunteers, clubs, leagues, and the wider Netball Family following publishing of the roadmap was extremely positive and supportive. Whilst everyone had been itching to get back on court, we couldn't thank everyone enough for their continued dedication and patience as we navigated through each stage of the roadmap with minimal notice of the details from Government at each stage before it was unlocked.



DYNAMIK

England Netball partners also looked to play their part, DYNAMIK as the official sports flooring partner to England Netball, wanted to do their bit to help clubs return after a tough year. They kindly pledged to support one lucky England Netball member club with a £500 grant as part of a fun online competition.

The competition had more than 200 entries, which saw England Netball members post on social media details of how their club had done their bit during COVID-19 and should therefore, in their opinion, win the grant. The winner of the prestigious grant was Grangetown Netball Club from the North East. The club was chosen because of their fantastic efforts in keeping members active throughout 2020, be it raising money for charity, home training programmes, cake bakes and quizzes plus so much more. Their story of togetherness was inspiring and the club received a great injection of additional funding to be able to help them in their return to court.



Grangetown's numerous quizzes, home workouts, bake sales and other fun activities caught the eye of the judges at DYNAMIK and helped them win the much-coveted grant

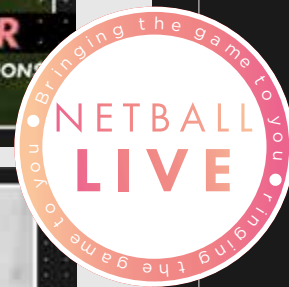
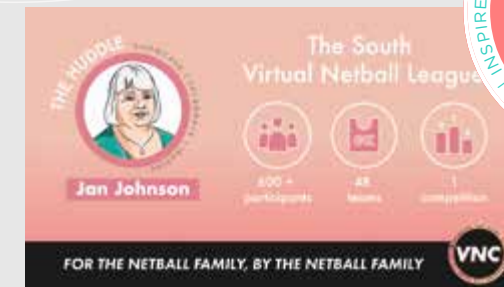
VIRTUAL NETBALL CLUB UPDATES

Whilst we waited for the Government to confirm progression through each stage of the roadmap, towards the end of February some of the Virtual Netball Club (VNC) content was released to the wider public to provide a taste of the benefits on offer as part of England Netball membership. With a glimmer of light that grassroots netball would reopen at the end of March the VNC looked to prepare the Netball Family to be court ready, providing twice weekly 'Netball Lives' for adults and children – with coaches and Vitality Roses players putting participants through their paces, and over 6,000 people taking part. 'Coaches Corner' content was made available weekly to refresh skills for the coaching community, including sessions with Jess Thirlby and Vitality Roses physio Julie Snow.

'Netball Natter' online get-togethers for the community to talk about important topics were held throughout the year. A 'Build Your Happy' session was designed specifically to inspire better mental mindset at a time when we really needed support with Beth Cobden, George Fisher and Rachel Dunn talking to Maimee Morris (the Roses Performance Lifestyle Advisor) and Sarah Ellis (the brilliant career coach, author of 'Squiggly Career', podcast founder of 'Amazing If'). These guests helped to motivate hundreds of the Netball Family as we looked ahead to restarting our game and getting back out there.

'The Huddle' was introduced to the VNC – a place for members to celebrate those who truly stepped up and kept the game and the Netball Family together during this time. To shine a spotlight on those going above and beyond for the sport and tell their story to inspire others.

Throughout the year the VNC was accessed and enjoyed by 32,000 of our community, offering online inspiration and a connection to the game whilst the courts were silent.



LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

During the pandemic we had been unable to deliver any coaching and officiating learning offers in person. There was high demand to continue to access these learning offers so behind the scenes we started adapting these offers to be delivered in a blended or virtual format. A new virtual Game Sense workshop was launched in August.

In February we launched a new online booking process for the first of our courses adapted to be delivered virtually, which was the England Netball Level 1 coaching course. Within hours of going on sale all places on the 18 courses (360 learners) had sold out and there was still more demand. All members were given access to a priority window to book on as another way to thank them for purchasing their 2020/21 membership.

Due to the growing demand, further courses were quickly arranged whilst also preparing to launch the England Netball blended Level 2 course and the Into Officiating course. Each time courses were made available the bookings flooded in, demonstrating the appetite from the Netball Family to supercharge their development and give back to their sport. It was so promising to see the desire to get involved and play a part when netball was able to return.

In addition to the formal qualification style learning and in recognition that many of our brilliant Walking Netball Hosts in particular shared their nervousness around returning to court, a series of six virtual 'Confidence to Court' sessions specifically for Walking Netball Hosts were delivered so that they could support Walking Netballers up and down the country to return to court when restrictions allowed.

Despite being unable to deliver learning offers 177 Level 1 and 233 Level 2 learners completed their outstanding portfolio tasks and achieved certification.



TOGETHER AGAIN


MARCH

In March, we began to see the first stage of the Government's roadmap unlocking with primary and secondary schools reopening. In line with this, netball was able to return in schools to much excitement on 8 March and then adult netballers didn't have long to wait until organised community netball activity could resume too.



RETURN TO PLAY

On 29 March, netballers across the country celebrated their return. Hundreds of clubs returned to outdoor training immediately with many more following during early stages of April and this was all made possible by the thousands of volunteers who helped our game get back up and running and our 2,500 COVID-19 Officers.




DR DAWN WILKINSON
COVID-19 officer AP Saints NC, Middlesex

'I'm a relative newcomer to the AP Saints Netball Club and was more than happy to share my knowledge and skills gained through my NHS clinical work during the COVID-19 pandemic to support the club's COVID-19 mitigation and risk assessment plans. At the beginning of the pandemic there was a lot of uncertainty about how netball would find its way back to competitive team games, however the England Netball roadmap has helped bounce the club back in action with safe training measures and matches, inspiring young girls and women to be their best selves during challenging times.'




EMMA SCARBOROUGH
COVID-19 officer and Coach
Stamford and Rutland Junior Netball Club

'Being a COVID-19 officer is huge role to undertake to ensure the safety of the girls in returning to netball. It is totally worth all the effort and hours as you see 160 girls from the club returning to court.'

MODIFIED RULES

Despite having to follow the rule modifications this didn't deter our participants who were delighted to get back on court. It was great to see all the photos on social media of people flooding to their local courts.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

During the month of March, we also had the opportunity to celebrate International Women's Day. As part of this, we spent some time talking to five incredible members of the Netball Family who fit this year's theme of 'Choose to Challenge'.



AFSANA AFSAR

BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS

Since September 2018, Afsana has worked tirelessly to break down barriers within the community and has been the key driver behind creating a netball provision that's empowering, welcoming and safe for ethnically diverse communities in Derby.



ISOBELLA COTTRELL

AGE STEREOTYPES

Izzy, aged 21, has volunteered for a total of over 900 hours over the past two years in a variety of netball roles whether it be coaching, umpiring, organising, teaching or leading. She also represents England Netball as a Youth Voice on the National Youth Sport Forum (led by the Youth Sport Trust).



EMMA BOWES-CRICK

CHALLENGING PERCEPTIONS

Emma has been involved in nursing for the Army for over 20 years and has fulfilled various deployments overseas in a variety of roles. She worked at the Nightingale Intensive Care Unit during the first lockdown, when it was used as a step-down unit for post-COVID patients.



LUCY PAGE

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A TEEN AND SHOWING A MATURE ATTITUDE

Lucy, aged 14, has had a particularly tough time through the pandemic with her mum working as a paramedic and her stepdad as a police officer. With both parents out on the front line, home life has been particularly stressful, not to mention balancing school.



NATALIE MORRIS

CHALLENGING THE MALE SPORTS MEDIA LANDSCAPE

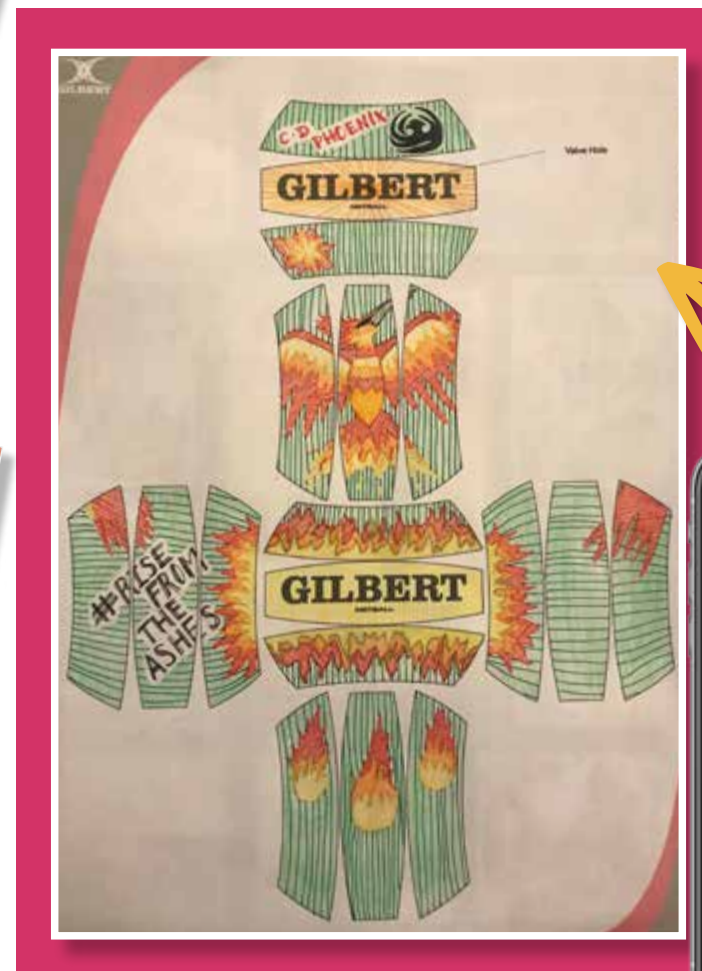
Natalie has several connections to netball, not only playing but also being a familiar voice with the work she does on The Netball Show – the first UK netball podcast which launched in 2017 – to help promote and raise the profile of the sport and the individuals involved.

Displaying resilience and determination, all these women either thrive working in a role, continue to break down barriers or successfully challenge stereotypes. Here are the individuals that we shone a light on from 8 March by telling their stories online and in our member magazine 5TH QTR.



GILBERT COMPETITION

As our official supplier of netballs, Gilbert offered England Netball members the chance to design and win 15 uniquely designed balls for their club in March. Over 200 unique ball designs were sent in and after a lot of deliberation by a panel made up of England Netball and Gilbert representatives, 19-year-old Lucia Gomez-Darder from CD Phoenix Netball Club was selected as the winner for her brilliant netball design.



MOOD OF THE NATION

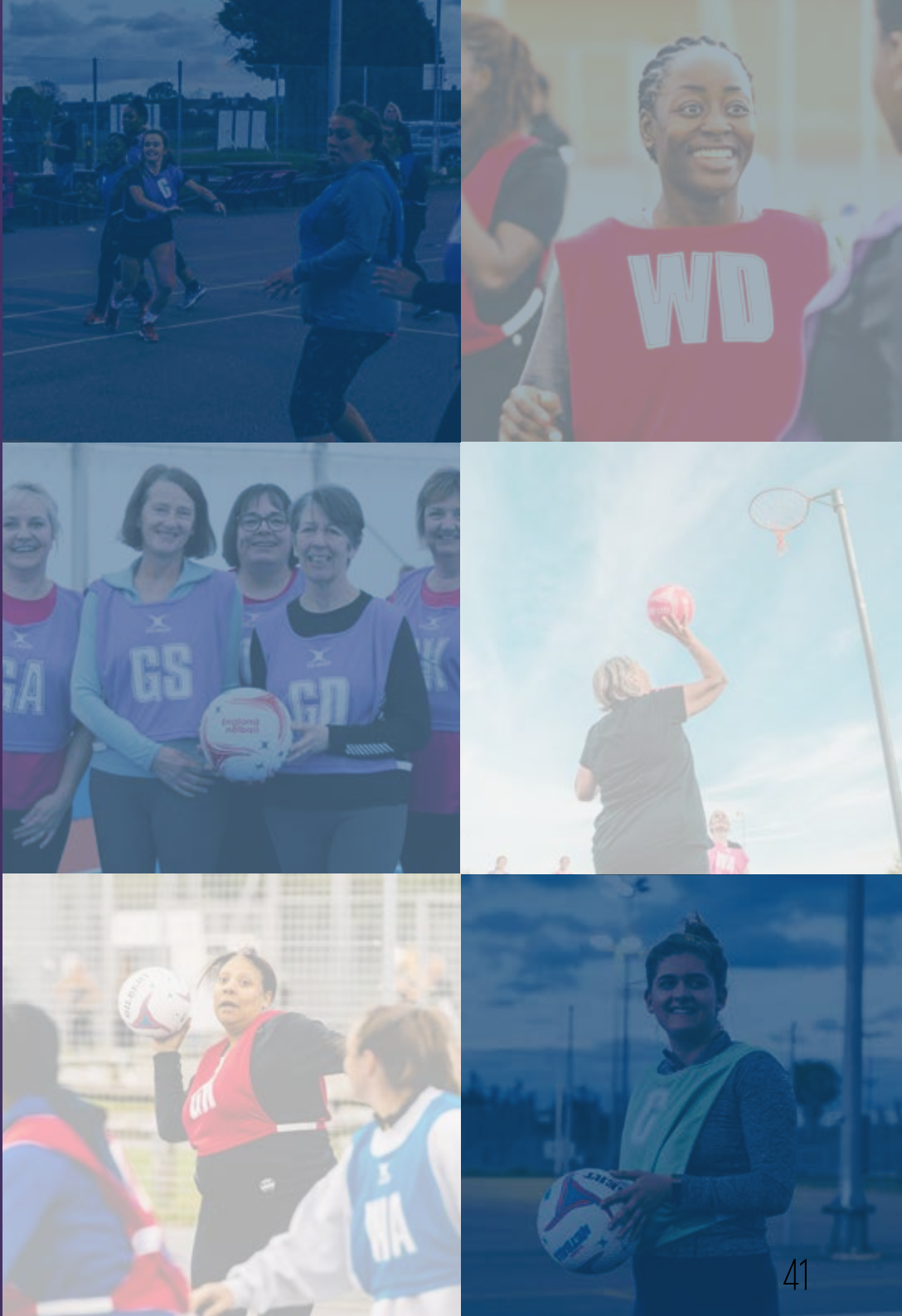
As we started to progress rapidly through the Government’s roadmap, we decided it was vital to check in on how the Netball Family was feeling about the return of community sport. It was a chance to reflect on what netball means to our members and how the pandemic has united us all behind one common purpose – safeguarding the future of netball.

Here’s some of the key findings from the Mood of the Nation survey:



WE WOULD LIKE TO SIGN OFF BY THANKING OUR MEMBERS, INCLUDING OUR BRILLIANT VOLUNTEERS, FOR ALL THAT YOU HAVE HELPED NETBALL ACHIEVE OVER THE LAST 12 MONTHS. DESPITE SO MUCH UNCERTAINTY AND TURBULENCE CAUSED BY THE PANDEMIC, THIS REPORT SHINES A LIGHT ON THE SPORT’S MANY GREAT ACHIEVEMENTS AND HIGHLIGHTS DURING THE LAST YEAR. WITHOUT OUR MEMBERS THE SPORT WOULD NOT HAVE GOT TO WHERE IT IS TODAY.

THERE ARE STILL MANY CHALLENGES FOR US TO OVERCOME, BUT WE KNOW THAT TOGETHER WE CAN ACHIEVE ANYTHING AND UNDOUBTEDLY WILL BUILD BACK STRONGER. WE’RE EXCITED TO NAVIGATE THROUGH THE NEXT CHAPTER WITH OUR MEMBERS, VOLUNTEERS AND FANS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE WHOLE NETBALL FAMILY.



FINANCIAL REVIEW



This year there was no requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 as the business of the Netball World Cup 2019 subsidiary has been concluded and that company is now subject to a Members Voluntary Liquidation.

Sadly, the 2020-21 financial year was largely subject to government-imposed restrictions and national lockdowns, due to COVID-19, which had a significant impact on the netball activity both on and off court. Despite the challenges and thanks to the rallying of partners, volunteers, staff and the broader netball family the business demonstrated strong resilience and there are still many achievements to celebrate from across the last 12 months.

Fantastic support was received from Sport England, our partners and sponsors to allow netball to remain visible and assist the nation in remaining active throughout the year. Early in the year grant funding from Sport England was confirmed for both 2020-21 and the following year (2021-22) enabling us to develop robust plans to protect our core activities during periods of enforced closure. Successful bids for additional funds followed (Sport England continuity funding - £1.1m and Sport Winter Survival Package funding from government - £2.8m) both protecting jobs and unlocking the opportunity to reactivate activity at all levels of the game.

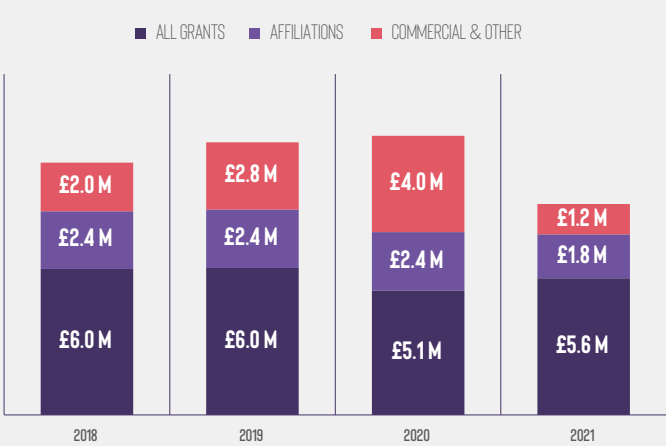
The support from partners was matched by amazing loyalty from the England Netball membership through the Rise Again campaign. A significant proportion of last year's members renewed to protect their sport at a time where netball activity could not be delivered. Although the drop in membership represented a reduction of £1m in revenues across 2020-21 (£600k) and 2021-22 (£400k), it still represents an excellent result in the current climate.

New sponsorship agreements have also been confirmed with Perform Better, Hyperlce and Physique Management during the year to add to the exciting partnerships already established with Vitality, Nike, Jaffa Fruit and Red Bull who have all continued their commitment.

England Netball had a turbulent year but came through without requiring any major financial support from our reserves to sustain the organisation. At the start of the year this scenario looked highly unlikely. However, due to strict expenditure controls being put in place, staff furloughed where possible and necessary and the additional funding secured in the year, a significant deficit was avoided.

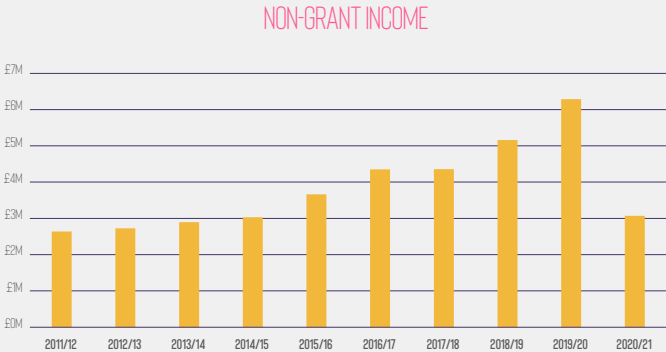
“To say I am proud of what we have achieved this year would be an understatement. I would like to thank all those involved in Netball from staff to members to volunteers and everyone in between. We have shown that we can all pull together in the face of adversity and achieve great things.”

EMMA FIELDING
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

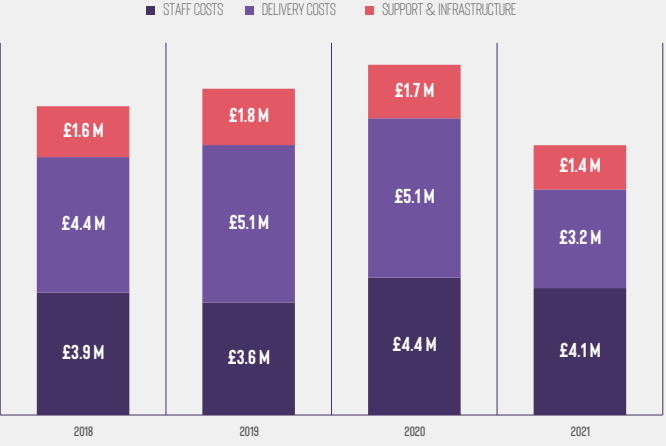


INCOME

Income for the year was £8.7 million compared to the previous year of £11.5 million, a decrease of £2.8m (-24%). This decrease was mainly attributable to decreases in ticket sales at events (£1.5m), decrease in membership renewals (£0.6m) and the limited delivery of grassroots programmes (£0.7m) all due to COVID-19 restrictions.



NON-GRANT INCOME



EXPENDITURE

Total expenditure for the year was £8.7m, a decrease of £2.6m (-23%) compared to the previous year (£11.3m), reflecting the fact that netball delivery was curtailed throughout the year.

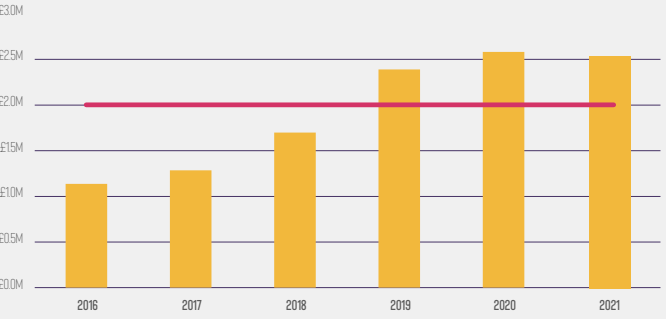
Delivery expenditure has decreased £1.9m with the largest decrease being grassroots netball (£1.4m). Staff costs are also lower due to a recruitment freeze and employees being furloughed when and where we were able to.

The next year will be a year of building back stronger in terms, of our game, our sport and our financial strength.

BALANCE SHEET

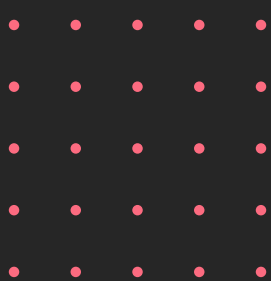
At the end of the year England Netball maintain a healthy cash position (2021: £6.3m and 2020: £5.0m) due largely to the advanced receipt of grant funding. The general reserve position has decreased by £16k.

ENGLAND NETBALL RESERVES



BALANCE SHEET (KEY ITEMS)

	2020-21	2019-20
	£'000	£'000
Fixed Assets	188	285
Current Assets		
Cash	6,273	4,972
Debtors	1,433	799
Liabilities		
Creditors	(5,327)	(3,473)
Net Current Assets	2,379	2,298
Net Assets	2,567	2,583
General Reserve	2,567	2,583



#RISEAGAIN



ENGLAND NETBALL, SPORTPARK,
3 OAKWOOD DRIVE, LOUGHBOROUGH,
LEICESTERSHIRE, LE11 3QF



TELEPHONE: 01509 277850
WWW.ENGLANDNETBALL.CO.UK
@ENGLANDNETBALL

